

A Medium Betwixt Two Extremes:

wherein it is proved that the whole first Adam
was condemned and the whole second Adam justified.

*A sermon preached on Rom. 8:1,
and published to prevent the further controversy
(in one main point) about justification:
to which are added reflections on some passages
in Mr. Clark's new book called
Scripture-Justification*

By Benjamin Keach

*Therefore as by the Offense of one, Judgment came upon all Men
to Condemnation; even so by the Righteousness of one, the free
Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life. Rom. 5.18.*

Originally published in 1698,
edited in 2024 by Thomas Brooks III

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Edited and formatted for print by Thomas Brooks III

ISBN 978-1-304-59080-0

To the Reader

My preaching upon this Subject was occasioned by what I met with from a gracious Person's mouth (who is a Member of the Church under my charge) who seemed very uneasy in her Communion, because in my preaching she said, though I hold forth the Doctrine of free Grace, and exalt Christ, yet do positively maintain that the Elect are under Wrath, or in a lamentable state before calling, or before they are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit, or are in a State of Union with him: which might I fear be occasioned through a mistake of that Doctrine some in this City of late so much insist on, viz. Justification and Union with Christ before the Spirit (the bond of that Union) is received; not that any of our Brethren, I hope, that preach that Doctrine do believe that the Elect are not under the Sentence of Condemnation and Wrath while they abide in the first Adam: though I fear they do not so carefully distinguish as they ought between our Fundamental and Virtual Justification in Christ, as our Head and Representative, and our actual or Personal Justification when we are united to him. And finding ill use made of that Doctrine, I have been persuaded to publish the first Sermon I preached upon this occasion, not knowing how far this Notion might spread amongst weak and unwary hearers, and having some hope this may be (through the Blessing of God) a prevention of it. One thing I cannot but bewail, i.e. that because we may differ perhaps in some respect from that Doctrine before mentioned, that we must therefore be charged with Arminianism, which Error we abhor, and any other that tends to becloud or darken the Doctrine of free Justification by Christ alone, without Works or inherent Righteousness. None have reason to think that I favor in the least the Arminian or Baxterian Errors, considering what I have lately published on the great Doctrine of Justification, in two Sermons on Rom. 4. 5. which Doctrine I have farther confirmed in those Sermons preached from the Text this is

grounded upon, viz. Rom. 8. 1. (this being only the first) in which the Nature of our mystical Union with Christ is opened, and the sweet Consolation that flows therefrom to all Believers largely applied.

Reader, just as this Sermon was going into the Press, I met with Mr. Samuel Clark's new Book, entitled *Scripture-Justification*, and have made short Remarks on some things he hath said: in a time of common Invasion every Man should take to his Arms; they need not wait for Orders, as one notes; for by this Man's Doctrine all is struck at.

Some think the difference between us and others who are unjustly called Antinomians, consists more in Words or Terms than otherwise; and I hope it is so: however if I differ from them in any thing, I cannot help it; I have here asserted what I in my Heart do believe, and I shall leave it to the Censure of all my Brethren, and others, with my earnest Prayers that Love, Union, Humility, and Charity may be more pressed after, which certainly is much wanting among us; and remain thine to serve thee in the Gospel, according to that small measure of Light and Ability received,

Horsly-down, in Freemans-lane,

Benjamin Keach.

SERMON I.

There is now therefore no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.

ROM. viii. 1.

In this Epistle to the Romans, the great Apostle of the Gentiles labors chiefly in the general to do two things.

First, To establish the Saints to whom he wrote, in the Doctrine of Justification by Christ alone.

Secondly, To excite or stir up all justified Persons to Sanctification or Holiness of Life. And,

That he might effectually do the first, he in the three first Chapters discovers the dismal state of all, both Jews and Gentiles, as considered in the First Adam, or the condition of every Soul by Nature, and the weakness and insufficiency of the Law by reason of Man's Pravity to obtain Justification and eternal Life thereby; insomuch that the Jews were in no better state than the Gentiles, all being gone out of the way, and the whole World become guilty before God. But to revive their sinking Hopes, he then displays the white Flag of Peace, through the Free-Grace of God in Jesus Christ, that though the Law pronounces nothing but Wrath and Condemnation to every Soul of Man, and also the remainders of Sin, or the Law in our Members, doth distress and sorely afflict Believers themselves; yet he shews us that through Jesus Christ we have a blessed Victory over the Law of Sin and Death, so that Sin cannot expose a true Believer to eternal Wrath, and that the Law of God (which holds all Unbelievers down under Guilt) can no more oblige Believers to eternal Condemnation, because Jesus Christ in our Nature hath answered all the Demands, and born the Penalty thereof. And from hence, he brings in the Words of our Text, as the profitable Use or Application of that Doctrine he had so well proved.

There is now therefore no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.

In my Text you have three Parts:

I. A Comfortable and Consolatory Proposition; *There is now no Condemnation, &c.*

II. A Description of the state of the Persons to whom this Cordial of Comfort belongs, viz. *To them which are in Christ Jesus.*

III. The Character of the Persons, or their Qualification or Property, as to the frame of their Hearts, and the course of their Lives; viz. They walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.

Or you may consider the former part of the Text thus, viz.

I. The Subjects spoken of, *Them which are in Christ Jesus.*

II. The Predicate, or Privilege asserted, viz. *There is now no Condemnation.*

We will consider the Terms. *There is no Condemnation;* i.e. no Sentence of Divine Wrath, no eternal Punishment.

1. God pronounceth them justified and acquitted, and so for ever free from Condemnation.

2. The Justice of God acquits them, and hath nothing to lay to their charge, they being in Christ Jesus.

3. The Condemnation of the Law cannot reach them, it can't hurt them, because they are delivered from the Curse thereof.

None else have any Power, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect?* Rom. 8. 33. i.e. such of them that are

called, and are united to Jesus Christ; for before that both Law and Justice could charge them.

It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ that died, v. 33, 34. Who can arrest, impeach, accuse, find guilty, and condemn such?

Object. Perhaps some may say, (1.) *The Devil may both accuse them and condemn them.* (2.) *Wicked Men may traduce and condemn them.* (3.) *And through Satan's Temptations, such that are in Christ Jesus may accuse and condemn themselves.*

Answ. What of this? For although Satan, wicked Men, and their own Hearts may lay many things to their Charge, and so pass a false Judgment upon them; yet since God justifies them, neither Law nor Justice can condemn them, and none else can do it: let all the Devils of Hell condemn them, and all wicked Men on Earth, nay though many good Men should ignorantly accuse and condemn them (as Job's three Friends dealt by him) yet they stand justified Persons before God.

The Apostle doth not say, there is no Sin in them which are in Christ Jesus, nor any thing worthy or deserving Condemnation: nor doth he say, there is no Affliction, no Correction, no fatherly Chastisements to them which are in Christ; but there is *no Condemnation*. 'tis one thing to be chastened, and another to be condemned: though all Legal Guilt is for ever gone, yet many Infirmities may attend such as are in Christ Jesus; and though God punishes them not as an angry Judge, yet he may correct them as an offended Father: when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World. though God is not so severe and unjust to condemn them, yet he is so wise, so holy, and so faithful as to correct them.

This *Now* refers (as some think) to what precedes, others take it as an Adverb of Time, i.e. in time past it was otherwise;

once they who are now in Christ Jesus were in the first Adam, dead and condemned Adam; and were under the Law, and Children of Wrath by nature, as others; and so under the Sentence of Condemnation. But now being transplanted into Jesus Christ, or into the Second Adam, they are actually freed, and for ever acquitted and delivered from Condemnation, (as were all those also under the Law, when they were in Christ) which *walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit*. These are the happy Persons, and this is their Character that are in Christ Jesus. Let me note here three things,

1. Here is an account of their special Vocation; They are in Christ Jesus.
2. Here is implied their Justification; There is now no Condemnation.
3. Here is comprehended also their Sanctification; who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.

Negatively, They *walk not after the Flesh*, they are not unsanctified or unholy Persons, they lead not ungodly Lives; they are not under the Power and Dominion of Sin, nor carried away whither ever carnal Affections would lead them.

Affirmatively, But after the Spirit; they are influenced by the Holy Spirit, they follow the Dictates of the Spirit; though there is Flesh in them, much Corruption in them, yet they *walk not after the Flesh*, they resist Sin, mortify Sin, or have crucified Sin, with the Affections and Lusts; they walk in a holy course of Life, and not as they did in times past: they live according to the rule of the new Creature.

Note here by the way, that negative Holiness is not enough; we must not only forsake Sin, but follow after Holiness, and bring forth the Fruits of Righteousness; not only cease from doing evil, but learn to do well.

Therefore, Wherefore? look back to the precedent Chapters, particularly to Chap. 7. 25. *I thank God, through Jesus Christ:* though I have a Body of Sin in me that makes me cry out, and though it be thus also with all Believers, yet Christ hath delivered me and them from the Guilt, the Power and Slavery thereof; *There is now therefore no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not, &c.*

And as this therefore may look backward to what precedes, so it may look forward to what succeeds, ver. 3. But first take notice of the 2nd verse, *For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath delivered me from the Law of Sin and Death.*

Brethren, the Law of Sin and the Law of God are opposites; now the remainders of Sin, or indwelling Sin, the Apostle calls, in chap. 7. *the Law of Sin and Death*, or the Law in the Members, &c. By the *Law of Sin* therefore is doubtless meant the Power and Rule of Sin: God's Law is no where called the Law of Sin; no, God forbid, *The Law is holy, just and good.*

By the *Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ*, Rom 8. 2., I understand the Root of all Grace in the Person of Christ, which is made over to Believers by the Spirit in their mystical Union; in which Sense Christ is not only made to us Wisdom and Righteousness, but Sanctification (also) and Redemption. Brethren, of that fullness of Grace, or of the Spirit which is in Christ, we do not only all receive, and Grace for Grace, but the Grace and Spirit in him is ours, as he is our Root or Head. 'Tis worthy to be noted that the Apostle brings in what he speaks in ver. 2, and 3. to confirm what he speaks in ver. 1. Yet I conclude what he speaks, ver. 2. *For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, &c.* refers to what he speaks in the close of the 1st verse, *Who walk not after the Flesh, &c.* And that in the 3^d verse, refers to the former part of the 1st verse, *For what the Law could not do, &c.* The Law could not justify us, acquit us, discharge us from Condemnation; but

contrariwise, through our inability to keep it, that condemns us: and so he illustrates and confirms his Consolatory Proposition of our free Discharge, and Justification by Jesus Christ, in ver. 1. by that in ver. 3. In the 2nd verse, the Spirit is set forth two ways.

1. By the Subject, in whom it is radically; i.e. in Christ Jesus.

2. By the Property; i.e. it is the Spirit of Life, which in our Union flows to us, as Sap from the Root; that so all the Branches in the True Olive might be made alive, and bring forth Fruit to God, or lead holy Lives. So much as to the Parts, Scope, and Explanation of the Terms of our Text.

From hence I shall observe this one Proposition, viz.

Doct. That all those that are in Christ Jesus, or have obtained actual Union with him, are justified Persons, and for ever delivered from Condemnation.

In speaking to this Doctrine, I shall,

I. By way of premise, lay down four Propositions.

II. Shew you what it is to be in Christ, or open the Nature of the Soul's Union with the Lord Jesus.

III. Shew you why such who are in Jesus Christ shall not, cannot come into a state of Condemnation.

IV. Shew you what kind of Persons they are which are in Christ Jesus.

V. Apply it.

I. The first Proposition is this, viz. *That all Mankind, even the Elect as well as others, are under Condemnation, before their actual Union with Jesus Christ.*

1. This I shall prove., and 2. Apply.

First, because the Elect as well as others, fell in the first Adam; and by virtue of the fall they were brought under Condemnation; *therefore as by the Offense of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation; even so*, Rom. 5. 12. &c. not one Soul of all his Posterity escaped; the Sentence, Judgment, and Condemnation past not upon Adam for his first Sin as a single Person, but as he was a common Head, a public Person, or the Representative of all Mankind that proceed from his loins: that Sentence that past upon Adam unto Condemnation, as he was a public Person, passed upon all Men in him, even the Elect as well as others; but the Sentence passed upon Adam unto Condemnation as he was a public Person; therefore that Sentence passed upon all Men in him, even upon the Elect as well as others.

Secondly, all Men, even the Elect as well as others, before Faith, or their actual Union with Jesus Christ, are under Sin and horrid Guilt: they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, *there is none that doeth good, no not one*, Psal. 14. 3. Mind what the Apostle affirms, ver. 9. *For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under Sin;* that is, under the Power, Guilt and Condemnation of Sin. I am, my Brethren, but a doing of that which Paul labored to do.

But further to prove and demonstrate that this is so.

1st. Evident it is, that all are born in Sin, all come into the World with the stain and guilt of Original Sin upon them; *Behold I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me*, Psal. 51. 5. Moreover, how doth Paul aggravate this Sin, and bewail himself for it? this is beloved, the Fountain and Root of all

Sin; our corrupt Nature proceedeth from Original Sin, the first transgression: can Man be clean that is born of a Woman? Adam *begat a Son in his own likeness*, i.e. a sinful Creature like guilty, and unclean as himself; not in God's likeness, having his Image, resembling him, no, but contrariwise, was more like unto Satan, and resembling him than God.

There are three things in this Sin, as it is noted by a worthy Writer.

1. A particular Act which he did, namely the breaking the Law of the first Covenant.
2. The legal Guilt that flowed from that Act both upon his own Person, and upon all his Posterity by Imputation.
3. That Natural depravity and corruption of our whole Nature in Soul and Body; the whole Man being defiled. And from hence comes Wrath and Condemnation upon all Men.

Now, brethren, let me here add one thing to your consideration, viz. though Adam fell by this Sin in his own Person under Condemnation (as well as we in him) yet afterwards when he believed and received by Faith the free promise of God, in the Seed of the Woman, he came into a Justified State: Adam no doubt was an Elect Person, the promise of Christ being directly made to him (who was also a Figure of him that was to come.) But now it would follow that if the Elect were never under the Sentence of Wrath and Condemnation, then Adam notwithstanding what I have said, was not; and if Adam was not in his own Person under it for his first Sin, then none of his Seed or Posterity were. But how absurd and contrary such a Notion is to Truth, I leave to all Men's Consideration.

2ly. As all Men are under Sin and Guilt by Original Transgression, so they are also by their own actual Sins: the Wages

of Sin is Death, yea, eternal Death; for there is no difference, *for all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God*. Originally there is no difference in respect of Sin and Guilt, nor actually neither between Jews and Gentiles, the Elect and Reprobates, in respect of their State before Grace.

3ly. This also further appears, because the Elect before they are in Christ are by Nature the Children of Wrath as well as others. Our sinful Nature is the proper object of God's Wrath, every one having a natural a to God in them, yea an antipathy to him, and enmity in their Carnal Minds against him: and hence also it is said, that God hates and is angry with all the Workers of Iniquity.

Thirdly, all Men before Grace and Union with Jesus Christ are in a State of Condemnation, because they are all under the Covenant of Works; and if all Unbelievers are under the Covenant of Works, then they are under Guilt and Wrath. *Now we know that whatsoever the Law saith, it saith to them who are under Law, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God*, Rom 3. 19.; that is, obnoxious to God's just Judgment and Condemnation. *Christ is the end of the Law to every one that believeth*, Rom. 10. 4.: Not to any other, not to any one that believeth not. If Believers only are in the new Covenant or Covenant of Grace, then all that are in a state of Unbelief are in the Covenant of Works, and so under the Curse and Condemnation of the Law: for all must be in one or the other Covenant, and in the first or second Adam.

Brethren, the Sentence of the Law lies upon the Elect before they are in Christ; though Christ hath received their Discharge for them, yet in their own Persons they are not acquitted. Sirs, Christ came only to redeem them that were under the Law, and the Curse thereof: and now if the Elect were not under the Law, and the Curse, who were they that he came to redeem? It appears they were not the Elect (by this strange Notion)

nor indeed if it be, as some hint, the Elect had no need of Redemption; for if not under Guilt, Wrath, and Condemnation, what Redemption did they need? *But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons,* Gal. 4. 4, 5.

Fourthly, that the Elect as well as others, before Union, &c. are under the Curse of the Law, and Condemnation, appears, because Christ bore the Curse of the Law, and was condemned for them, or in their stead; if they were not under the Curse of the Law, why did God lay Jesus Christ our Surety under the Curse thereof? *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law; being made a Curse for us,* Gal. 3. 13. How are we redeemed from that which we were never under! Now there is a twofold Curse of the Law.

1. An Original Curse in Adam; this past upon him (as I have proved) and upon all Men in him.

2. An actual Curse, or a Curse for all actual Sin which remains upon all whilst they abide under the Law: for as many as are for the Works of the Law, are under the Curse; for it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them,* Gal. 3. 10. Thus by our actual Sins we were brought also under this Curse, is evident.

Obj. *But doth not Paul say, Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law?*

Ans. 1. It appears such whom he hath redeemed, &c. were once under it; and if they were delivered before they believed, 'tis necessary that such who assert that, should assign the time when they were delivered. Paul tells the Saints when they were delivered from Sin, Guilt, and the Curse; being then made free from Sin: *Then, when? why, when they believed, and received Christ and his holy Doctrine, and obeyed it from the Heart.*

2. It is evident that Paul speaks it of Believers, even of such as had received the Spirit of Adoption; and so could call God Father.

3. The Price may be paid for the Redemption of Captives, and yet they may not presently be delivered, but may remain in Bondage, in Slavery, and lie in Chains: a Surety may satisfy the Law for a Criminal, or for a Debtor, yea pay the utmost Farthing; but he may notwithstanding lie under the Sentence of Death, or remain in Prison for a time, and not have his personal Discharge.

The Sacrifice may be offered up, and an Atonement may be made, but the Blood may not be sprinkled; the slaying the Sacrifice is one thing, and the sprinkling the Blood is another. So the Atonement made for us by Jesus Christ, which is the Price and meritorious Cause of our Redemption and Justification, is one thing, and our receiving the Atonement or the application of his Blood to our personal and actual discharge from Sin, Guilt and Condemnation, is another thing: *for if when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life*, Rom. 5. 10. We grant God was not only made reconcilable by the death of his Son, but by his Death God was fully reconciled; that is he received a full Satisfaction by that one Offering: Faith adds nothing to the Merits of Christ's Blood, or meritorious Sacrifice, but it is by his Life, by his Intercession, that it is made effectual or efficacious unto us, who pleads with God for the Spirit, which he purchased also for his Elect, that so the saving Benefits and Blessings might be applied to them: And therefore the Apostle adds in the next verse, *and not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement*. God hath, as if Paul should have said, through Christ's Intercession given us a free and personal Discharge purchased for us; he hath given us Faith to receive the Atonement. The particle *Now* hath its Emphasis, denoting the Privilege of all such as believe; and hence

it is that we glory in Tribulation: we are now actually acquitted and for ever delivered from Condemnation. Sirs, since the strict time of the laying down the Price of our Redemption was not the time when many of the Elect were actually acquitted and justified, why should it be asserted to be the time when any of them were? For those Believers that lived and died from Adam till Christ came, were justified, and went to Heaven before the Sacrifice was offered, and the Atonement actually made: the Father trusted the Son according to that holy Compact that was between them, Christ covenanting and engaging that he would die for them. And now as Adam received the Atonement when he believed, and not till then; so we when we are in Christ, believe, do receive the Atonement also, and not before: for at the same time, and upon the same terms, they under the Law received it, we under the Gospel-Dispensation do receive it: by *Time* I mean when they had, and we have actual Union with Christ, and believe, or do receive the Spirit, the Bonds of this Union.

Brethren, though all in the first Adam were fundamentally and representatively condemned in him, his Sin being imputed so to all his Offspring; yet none are actually condemned until they actually exist and partake of his corrupt Nature: so in the second Adam all the Elect were fundamentally and representatively justified in him, his Righteousness being imputed so to all his Spiritual Seed, or Off-spring; yet none of them are actually and personally justified until they are united to him, and partake of his Divine Nature,

Fifthly, all Men, the Elect as well as others, are under Condemnation before Grace, or actual Union with Christ, because it is positively said, that *he that believeth not, is condemned; and the Wrath of God abideth upon him*. The Law condemns him, let him be who he will, even every Soul that believes not savingly in Jesus Christ; and it remains upon him because he believes not, or because he continues in the first Adam, in condemned Adam, and

is not transplanted into the second Adam, Jesus Christ: Nay, and his Unbelief binds all his Sins, and the Sentence upon him; not believing is not the first Disease, but it is the refusing the Remedy. Those stung with fiery Serpents were mortally wounded, that was their Disease; and if any would not, did not look up to the Brazen Serpent, that was the reason they died, in respect of their refusing the Remedy; but their being stung was that which killed them. So 'tis Sin that is the breach of the Law of God, which is the Disease, and the Cause why Sinners perish; all are condemned already, and their refusing of Christ offered in the Gospel for their Cure, aggravates their Sin and Condemnation: and it leaves such that finally persist in Unbelief, incurable for ever.

Sixthly, all before they are in Christ are under Condemnation, because the Holy Ghost frequently ascribes our actual or personal Justification to Faith; and can't we read those Scriptures without offense? or do any think they understand this Point better than Paul, or the other Apostles? *Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, &c.* Rom. 5. 1. *Therefore we conclude that a Man is justified by Faith, &c.* Rom. 3. 28. *Knowing that a Man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ: even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ, &c.* Gal. 2. 16. And again he saith, *That we might be justified by Faith,* Gal. 3. 24. *In him all that believe are justified from all things, &c.* Acts. 13. 39. *He that believeth hath the Son, and he that believeth not hath not the Son, but the Wrath of God abideth on him,* John 3. 36.

Brethren, where is it said in the Scripture that any Person was justified that believed not, or whilst an Unbeliever, or before he believed? And is it not good, nay best, to keep to the form of sound Words? For though it is said that God justifies the Ungodly, yet they are not ungodly when justified: true, that excludes all previous Qualifications to Faith; but not that God justifies an Unbeliever that is in his Sins in the first Adam,

Obj. *Is it not Christ and his Righteousness that which justifies us, or is the matter of our Justification? Will ye make Faith to be a Cause, or the condition of our Justification before God?*

Answ. No, by no means; though I know some Learned Men, and sound in the Faith, seem to hint as if Faith was a condition of our Justification. But how that which God himself gives to us by his free and absolute Promises, can be a condition of the Covenant, or of our Justification, I see not: that which is part of the Covenant on God's part, can't be the Condition of it on our part. Also they call Faith the instrumental cause of Justification, which we must leave them to explain (they mean, I think, but as the Hand that applies a Plaster is a cause of the Cure.) We must say with a late learned Author, *Faith is no qualifying Condition, nor any procuring Cause of our Justification*; though without Faith God declares no Man a justified Person.

2. Faith doth not cause or render the Satisfaction of Christ any ways the more satisfactory unto God; for God was as much satisfied in Christ for his Elect before Faith as after, though the Satisfaction, Merits and Righteousness of Christ, are not applied so as the Man is pronounced a justified Person until he is united to Christ by the Spirit, and so is helped to believe on him; Faith being the Hand that receives, or that apprehends Jesus Christ.

Brethren, the Holy Spirit in our Union with Christ, puts upon us the Robe of Righteousness, which was not upon us before we obtained that Spiritual Union; it is offered unto all, but it is upon all them that believe.

All our Orthodox Divines agree with us, that Faith, neither as a Habit, or Grace, or as an Act, much less in respect of the Fruits thereof, justifies us: when therefore 'tis said we are justified by Faith, it intends not any Moral or Physical Causality in Faith as a Qualification, but only by virtue of the Object it apprehends. Mr.

Bradford that Holy Martyr saith, *Not the Action it self of believing, as it is a quality in Man, doth so deserve, but because it taketh that Dignity and Virtue from the Object Jesus Christ.*

We do not mean, that Faith by itself, and of itself doth justify us, which is only as an Instrument whereby we apprehend Christ who is our Justice. Faith was accounted to Abraham for Righteousness, not the action by which, but that which he did believe; or Faith not in respect of it self apprehending, but in respect of the Object apprehended. Faith justifies a Sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other Graces that do always accompany it, or of good Works, which are the Fruits thereof, nor as if the Grace of Faith, or any act thereof were imputed to him for Justification; but only as an Instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his Righteousness. For any to say otherwise, is to render Faith to be part of our Reconciliation or Satisfaction to God, which is to lessen the Merits of Christ, and take the Crown from his Head, and make Justification not to be by Grace alone, or by Christ alone. Faith we know is the Creature's act, though given of God, or a Grace bestowed upon us, by which we are helped so to do; yet *with the Heart Man believeth, &c.* Rom. 10. 10.

The Doctrine of some Men about Faith justifying the Sinner, tends to bring in a new Covenant of Works, i.e. a mild Law of Faith, and sincere Obedience in the stead of the severe Law of perfect Obedience, and plainly renders the Satisfaction and Righteousness of Christ defective or insufficient; as if Faith was part of our justifying Righteousness, or as if we were not fully reconciled to God by the death of his Son, but that he was only reconcilable; and that it is Faith and sincere Obedience indeed, which completes that Reconciliation.

Brethren, faith, I say again, is said to justify us only in respect of the Object Jesus Christ, whom it apprehended; and it is no part of the matter which doth justify us (the Righteousness of

Christ being alone the material cause of our Justification) nor doth Faith add any thing to Christ's Satisfaction, or to his Righteousness which alone is imputed to us to our Justification before God. though we say that Righteousness is not imputed to the actual and personal Justification of any Man till he has actual Union with Christ; yet I deny that Faith in order of Nature is before Union (or at least before the reception of the Spirit in order to Union) though not as to time; for Christ takes hold of us before we can take hold of him; also Faith is a Fruit of the Spirit; and sure the Seed must be sown before there can be Fruit. We are passive in Regeneration, but not in the act of Faith. But when a poor Sinner receives the Spirit, then it is that he in his own Person is declared and pronounced righteous; he being in Christ is pardoned, and actually acquitted and discharged from that Legal Guilt, or from that Obligation he lay under to Condemnation in the first Adam, the Sentence being then taken off, and he loosed from those Fetters and Chains by which he was before bound; and this therefore is more no doubt than simply justified in his own Conscience.

For though Christ as our Surety when he rose from the dead, received a full discharge for us; yet until we are united by the Spirit unto him, by which Faith is wrought in our Souls, and our Eyes are enlightened, we have not this great Blessing made over to us. Mind that Passage of the Apostle again, By whom now we have received the Atonement.

Now the Case is altered, now we are in Christ Jesus. Brethren, we have not the Portion until we have the Person; now the Law's Sentence and Condemnation can no more reach us; now that Husband is dead, that cruel Husband, and we are married unto another; now we are actually acquitted; or not till now personally justified.

Some add justified *Foro Dei*, or in God's sight: but so expressing it, I fear hath clouded the matter, because known to

God, before him, or in his sight were all his Works from everlasting. Justified before God may be taken two ways. (1.) In distinction from that before Men, or in a Man's own Conscience: if they mean that, I grant it. (2.) In respect had to that sight he hath of things; who calls things, and seeth things that are not, as if they were. As Abraham is called the Father of many Nations, when he was not then the Father of one Isaac. God saw us in the first Adam condemned, and in the second Adam justified, at one and the same time, even from Eternity: but will it follow from thence that we were both actually condemned and actually justified from Eternity? yet as our Annotators note concerning Abraham, he was the Father of many Nations in God's sight, or before him; who, as Paul adds, quickneth the dead, and that calleth things that are not as if they were. Will any say, as to matter of Fact, that thing is, when God's Word says it is not? now they affirm this, because it was so to God, or before him; who beholds things long before they are, or do exist, or have a being.

So then, my Brethren, the Controversy (if there be any) lies not in the case of Justification, in respect had to what a sight God hath of it, or how matters are before his eyes, before whom or in whose sight all things were done from Eternity, which were not actually done until things, and persons, in time did, or do actually exist. But it lies in this, viz. when, or at what time a Sinner is pronounced a righteous Person, being actually pardoned, acquitted, and discharged from Condemnation, or personally justified as to matter of Fact.

3. Brethren, that Righteousness by which we are justified is called a Gift. Do we receive the Righteousness of Christ, before we received Christ himself? Moreover, certainly no Man receives Christ till he receives the Spirit of Christ. Now the Apostle declares expressly, that when we receive Grace (at leastwise in the Seed) then also we receive the Gift of Righteousness; They that receive abundance of Grace, and the Gift of Righteousness, &c.

From the whole it is evident, that until we do receive Christ, and have Union with him, we receive not his Righteousness, or are not personally justified, but are under the Condemnation of the Law.

Seventhly, Moreover, this further will appear, because Justification of our Persons makes a relative Change (though not a real Change) a relative Change is a Change of the State of the Person, viz.

He that was dead, dead in Law, is brought into a State of Life; there is, my Brethren, the Life of Justification, and the Life of Sanctification; I mean the former, viz. the Life of Justification: This thy Brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

He that was a child of Wrath is now become a Child of God: Such who were not God's People, are now his People. He that was condemned, is now actually justified. But if we were delivered from Condemnation before we were in Christ Jesus, and so personally justified, this Act of Justification makes no such relative change; for then it will follow that the Elect were never dead in Law, but alive, and in a good State when Unbelievers, and gross Sinners, Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, Thieves, and what not; for such were some of you: And not the Children of Wrath before, but the Children of God; and not condemned, but justified; not under the Law, but under Grace.

Or else this Absurdity will follow, viz. that a Man may be dead and alive, a Child of Wrath and yet a Child of God; be actually condemned, and yet be actually justified, at one and the same time.

Obj. The Elect we say are not justified in their own Consciences, or have not the evidence of it until they believe. They were acquitted and justified before, but they did not know it.

Ans. This will not help, nor alter the case in the least; the purport of this is, i.e. my state was good, but I did not know it; I was alive, a Child of God and Justified, but did not know it, or had not the feeling or sensible comfort and evidence of it in my own Soul; I had a personal Right and Title to the eternal Inheritance, but the Deeds and Evidence were not in my own sight.

Brethren, it is one thing to have a thing in my own actual Possession, and another thing to know I have it. I am not a speaking of what a sight God might have of Men, or how he sees, or how things are before him; before whom, or in whose sight the World was from eternity; but of things that actually be, or do actually exist, and take hold of Persons, &c. the Decree and Purpose of God without the execution of it, brings nothing actually to be or to exist: though his Decree doth render the thing certain to be in time. I deny not that fundamental, and representative Justification of the Elect in Christ their Head, or as a common Person, which is before Faith, which lies in Christ making full Satisfaction for all their Sins, and meriting Faith for them.

I also grant a federal Union of the Elect with Christ, as our Surety and blessed Sponsor, from Eternity, who also then received a grant of a discharge for them from Condemnation, upon his holy Compact and Covenant with the Father, on the account of what he was to do and suffer, which made Justification and Salvation sure for them all, see 2 Tim. 1.9. Tit. 1.2. I say, it was sure for them,

1. By God's eternal and unchangeable Decree and Purpose.
2. By virtue of that Covenant made between the Father and the Son, in behalf of the Elect, from eternity.
3. And also by the Death and Resurrection of Christ, for Christ was actually justified when he rose from the dead.

Now we grant that he was not justified as a single, but as a public Person, viz. as the Head and Representative of all the Elect. See what a Reverend Author says:

For this was a legal acquittance given to Christ for all our Sins, and so to us also considered as in him, his Death was but the Satisfaction and Payment; but this is the first Act of absolution, yea and it is the Original Act which is upon record between God and Christ; and our Justification and Atonement (when we are justified by Faith in Christ) is but a copy fetched from this Roll and Court-Sentence then pronounced.

But notwithstanding this, I say, though Christ was thus justified, and we virtually in him, when he arose from the Dead, and he received for us an actual discharge as our Surety, yet the Elect do not receive an actual discharge, or are not in their own Persons acquitted or pronounced justified and righteous Persons, until they have actual Union with Christ: and such as call this a contradiction, do but betray their own Ignorance. Take the said Doctor again in what he farther says, viz. saith he,

Lest there be a mistake, let me add this, that it is necessary that we be justified in our own Persons, by Faith (notwithstanding this former Act thus legally passed) whereby we lay hold upon what God did thus before for us in Christ, to the end that God upon our believing, may, according to his own Rules, justify his justifying of us unto all the World; which until we do believe he could not do: for according to the revealed Rules of his Word (which he professeth to proceed by at the latter day) there is a Curse and Sentence of Condemnation pronounced against us, under which we stand till he shall take it off by giving us Faith, unto which he hath in the same word made the promise of justifying us in our own Persons as before he had done in Christ. Yet still notwithstanding, so as although

when we first believe, then only Justification is actually and personally applied to us, &c.

Thus the Doctor, which I agree with.

Eighthly, All Men are in a State of Condemnation before they are in Christ, or have actual Union with him, doth appear, because Ministers in preaching the Gospel are commanded, and do preach it to lost, undone, and miserable Sinners, or to such as are in a deplorable State, even under Wrath and Condemnation; and do declare this to be the State of all out of Christ, without exception.

Not to offer Christ to justified Persons, to such that are delivered from Condemnation, and so in a good State, but to such who are in a lost state, condemned to eternal Misery, and under the Curse of the Law (which is God's Curse) and Children of Wrath.

I am told lately, that some there are who affirm the Elect did not fall in Adam; but this I can't tell how to believe, why then did Christ die? Brethren, must Christ be offered to righteous Persons, to justified Persons, or to Sinners condemned? or do any of us preach that which we believe not? do any preach thus, or have they any Authority so to do? viz. Sinners, if you are elected, you are in a good State, and are actually justified whether you believe or not, only you do not know it, or have not the evidence of it in your own Consciences. Or do we not all preach to all out of Christ as unto ungodly ones, to such that are under Wrath and Condemnation in their own Persons, and so remain until they believe or have Union with Christ. Our Lord came not to call the Righteous, as such, neither self-righteous ones, nor such who in a Gospel-Sense are righteous Persons, but Sinners to Repentance; to such that were really lost in the first Adam, and under the Bondage of Sin, and the Law. True, the Jews said indeed, that they were free, and never were in Bondage, &c. How saist thou, ye shall be made free?—but what says our Blessed Lord, he that committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin—If the Son therefore shall make you

free, then are you free indeed. And doth Christ make any free until they are united to him, and so believe in him?

But to put the matter to an issue, I find we are all agreed in this Point who preach free Grace.

Dr. Crisp (who I think is abused both by his Friends and Enemies) says,

All by Nature are under the Curse of the Law. Cursed, cursed, cursed, saith he, every Moment, every Hour.

But how actual Condemnation can consist with actual Justification I see not; or how a Man can be under the curse of the Law, and yet be blessed with the chiefest Gospel-blessing, is strange to me.

Ninthly, and Lastly, All are under Condemnation, &c. before they are in Christ Jesus, appears, because the Holy Spirit by its Convictions represents this to be the state of every elect Soul by nature, namely Children of Wrath, even in a condemned state; and not only so in their own Consciences, but even as others. And hence, a Minister when he meets with a Person under Convictions, on whom God hath begun a good work, asketh him, what do you judge your State is by Nature? O Sir, saith he, a woeful state and condition, as in the first Adam, and without Christ, under God's fearful Wrath, being condemned to Eternal Misery, having originally and actually broken the Law of God, which lays every Man obnoxious to everlasting Burning. Now sure the Divine Spirit in Convictions, would never hold forth or represent this to be the state of the Soul before it is in Jesus Christ, if it was not really so; because he is a faithful and true Witness, and because he is God, and cannot lie. So much shall suffice to prove this premised Proposition.

Application

Caution 1. Shall be a Use of Caution to such, to take heed how they seek to render the state of the Elect to be good before Grace and actual Union with Jesus Christ.

1. Because the holy Word of God declares their State to be very bad; and as to the present State of their Persons whilst Unbelievers, there is no difference.

2. Because such a Notion cannot tend to the Glory of God, nor the profit of any Person, either before or after they do believe. I challenge any to shew what Glory it can bring to God, or benefit it can be to any Sinner, to hear he is justified or discharged from Wrath and Condemnation before he is in Christ; or that it can be of profit to him when he doth believe, to be told that his State was good before he did believe in Christ Jesus, though he knew it not.

3. But contrariwise it may tend to encourage Unbelievers to conclude that their State is good, though Swearers, Drunkards, and what not, and so harden them in their Sins, and to disbelieve or cast contempt upon what some faithful Ministers daily declare to the contrary.

4. It also clearly tends to lessen or extenuate the rich Grace of God, in giving his Spirit to regenerate the Soul, and to work Faith in us, if the relative and real change were not at one and the same time, which the Scripture doth affirm it is; *But you are sanctified, but ye are justified*, &c. I Cor. 6. 11. Also then Grace received, could not be any sign of our being passed from a state of Death unto a state of Life, which the Apostle asserts it is, By this we know that we have passed from Death to Life, *because we love the Brethren; he that loveth not his Brother abideth in Death*, I John 3. 14. The Apostle no doubt intends a state of Death.

2ly. It puts also a just rebuke upon such as cause trouble or divisions amongst Christians on such a Notion. Brethren, were it a

Truth that the Elect were actually delivered from Condemnation, and were personally justified before they are in Jesus Christ, yet certainly it cannot be judged to be an Essential of Salvation nor of Church-communion: are all such Persons not to be communicated with that can't believe the Elect are acquitted or delivered from Condemnation, or personally justified before they are in Christ Jesus?

Secondly, This I hope may tend to clear up the matter, and shew the present difference is but little, and rises rather from mistaking of words than otherwise: for according to what I have said and proved it appeareth,

1. That God sees things, even all his works from everlasting; and calls things that are not as if they were. Things before God or in his sight, is one thing; and things as to us, or as actually existing, is another thing. That God sees the Elect justified and glorified too from Eternity, is evident, who are not actually and personally justified, nor indeed can be said so to be, until they personally exist and are in Jesus Christ.

2. That to be federally, fundamentally and representatively justified in Christ is one thing, and to be actually and personally justified is another thing; or Christ's receiving our Discharge and Justification (as our Head and Surety) for us, is one thing; and the application thereof, or his giving of it out unto us, pronouncing us just and righteous before God, in our own Consciences, and before all the World, is another thing.

Thirdly, We infer from hence that God magnifies his rich Grace exceedingly to us who believe, or that the work of Grace is a glorious work upon the Soul, and that Union with Christ is to be esteemed as one of the richest manifestations of his electing Love.

Fourthly, That all Men out of Christ may see cause from hence to tremble, considering what a woeful State they are in, and so strive to fly to Christ with speed.

Fifthly, That such who are in Christ have cause to admire God's Free Grace, and may from hence also take in a most precious and rich Cordial of the highest comfort and consolation; for therefore, Now there is no Condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. But no more at this time.

A POSTSCRIPT

Containing a few Reflections upon some Passages
in Mr. Clark's new Book, entitled Scripture-
Justification.

Never more need for all that are Orthodox (I mean who are established in the Doctrine of Justification by the imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ, or by his active and passive Obedience alone, according to the Scripture, and as maintained by most of the Ancient Fathers, and all our worthy modern Protestant Divines) to cement together in Love and Union, and to pass by small matters of Difference, considering what a grand design is carrying on by the great Enemies of the true Christian Religion, for Satan never appeared in his Instruments more bold and bare-fac'd against this grand Fundamental of Christianity, viz. that of Justification, since blessed Luther's days, who as an Instrument (with others) gave him such a Wound, than at this present time.

Reader, we had need bestir our selves, and rouse up with holy Zeal for God; for all, even the Foundation, is struck at.— Just as this precedent Sermon was going to the Press, a Book came to my hand wrote by Mr. Samuel Clark, a Man of great Learning; and who indeed writes without much seeming Gall or Invectives▪ against any Man's Person (the better to vent his Indignation against the Doctrine he opposes) striving to revive and maintain the Baxterian Error, with such Confidence and barefacedness, that if some able Pen do not answer him, it may do much harm to weak and unwary Christians.

He says, he would not for a World lift up the least thought, much less a Finger, or Pen, or utter the least word derogatory to the free Grace of God, or cast the least blemish or speck upon the

Reformation, or the worthy Persons that were Instruments in it. Yet he hath been so unhappy as to attempt the razing and utter overthrowing of that grand Truth, in which mainly the Reformation consisted, viz. Justification by the imputation of Christ's active and passive Obedience, through the free Grace of God, apprehended and received by Faith alone, without any thing wrought in us, or done by us; not by imputing Faith or any other act of Evangelical Obedience, but the imputing of Christ's Obedience and Satisfaction exclusively of all things else whatsoever. And that Faith is only said to justify us objectively, or in respect had to the Object Jesus Christ, which it taketh hold of.

To this purpose Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Zanchy, Perkins, Ames, Dr. Usher, Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Owen, Dr. Sibs, Dr. Preston, Norton, Burroughs, Caryl, Pemble, the Assembly, and indeed all other Antient and Modern Writers generally.

But contrary to this Doctrine see what Mr. Clark saith, viz.

That justifying Faith is the same thing in substance with effectual Calling, Repentance, Regeneration, Conversion, Sanctification, Renovation, forming of Christ in the Soul, &c.

Ans. What now is the Purport of this Notion? Why that Faith in a large or comprehensive Sense, i.e. Faith with all other Graces and inherent Righteousness, God hath instituted and ordained to be our justifying Righteousness in his Sight, as in other places in his Book he doth assert without mincing the matter.

Again, he saith,

I would avoid many figurative Expositions of Scripture, which others are feign to make use of to salve their Phaenomena, as when we are said to be justified by Faith, they take it Metonymically for the Object of Faith, viz. the Righteousness of Christ; which what is it else than to make the Scripture a meer Nose

of Wax, and a Leaden Rule, and to comply with our Fancies? &c.

Answ. This is much like Bellarmine in another case: it appears the Doctrine we are established in, and upon which we build all our Hopes of Justification and eternal Life, is but a Fancy; What is now become of that Doctrine Paul preached, and all our worthy Reformers? How will this make the Papists and Quakers smile. 'Tis not, according to Mr. Clark, the Object of Faith, not Jesus Christ that Faith apprehends, and we alone trust in, but it is Faith that justifieth us comprehensively taken; that is, Faith, Love, Charity, good Works, and sincere Obedience that is imputed to us, to our Justification in the sight of God: And that so far as you act in Faith, Holiness, and in sincere Obedience, so far you are justified. For he positively affirms, viz. *That our Justification at present, while we are in this World, is but partial, imperfect, and incomplete.* These are his Words.

Answ. Now if we are not perfectly justified, it follows then we are not perfectly delivered from Condemnation, nor acquitted from the Guilt of all Sin, and so not in a state of Life, nor made free indeed by the Son of God; and then also Christ's Dove is not without spot, nor undefiled in respect to Justification: And then also it follows (as the Papists say) there is no assurance can be had or attained in this Life, or until Death, nor can we be said to be compleat in Christ; besides, it confounds Justification with Sanctification, nay it makes them but one and the same thing: Nay more, that by a Law Righteousness is to be obtained, and so Christ is dead in vain.

Now I profess, I can see but little difference between this Doctrine and that of Bellarmin's and other Papists. If famous Luther and other worthy Reformers, had wrought no better Reformation than this, the Church of God would have received but little benefit from them, nor would the Papists have been so angry

with them; but the Notion of Mr. Clark and his Abettors certainly tends to raze and root out that ancient Doctrine which the Apostles preached, and those worthy Men labored to restore about Justification. Did Bellarmine ever deny, that their good Works and inherent Holiness, which they made the matter of their Justification before God, were performed by the Grace of God, and the Assistance of the Holy Spirit? This Man only excludes legal Works from having any thing to do in our Justification, but includes all Gospel-Works and sincere Obedience: he asserts these kind of Works and free grace are consistent; and because not derogatory in point of Salvation, therefore not in Justification. He says that we must allow of Gospel-Works or Holiness to concur to Justification, and this Doctrine will appear, &c.

Answ. Yet he would feign insinuate that this Doctrine of his is in effect the same with that of the old received Doctrine of our Divines : who teach, saith he,

That the sola fides solum, yet not fides sola, i.e. solitaria justificat; though Faith alone, yet not that Faith which is alone does justify.

What's the Purport of this? Why because the Faith of God's Elect, by which alone we apprehend or receive the Object, Jesus Christ, by whom we are justified, is attended with good Fruits, as Sanctification and Holiness, by which it is known from a false and dead Faith; therefore Faith, good Works, and Holiness is (the matter, or) that which doth justify us before God: or because Faith in respect of its own excellent Nature doth purify and sanctify us; therefore God hath instituted and ordained Faith and inherent Holiness to justify us; and because inherent Holiness and Sanctification tends to make us meet for Heaven, therefore it is our only Title for Heaven. Is it not said that God imputes Righteousness without Works, and justifies him that works not?

How then do Works concur with, or are included, or joined with that Righteousness that is our Justification before God?

Take a Passage of Reverend Perkins, viz.

It is objected that true Faith is never alone; I answer, saith he, thus Faith is never alone in the Person justified, nor in Godly Conversation, but is joined with all other virtues, yet in the act and office of Justification it is alone; the Eye in the Body is not alone, being joined with all other Parts, Hand, Foot, &c. nevertheless the Eye in seeing is alone, for no part of the Body seeth but the Eye.

He shews that Faith alone is the Eye which sees the Object Jesus Christ, and apprehends him and his Righteousness, whose Righteousness only is the material cause of our Justification before God. See the Assembly's Confession, &c.

All whom God effectually calleth, he freely justifieth, not by infusing Righteousness into them, but by pardoning their Sins, and by accounting and accepting their Persons as righteous, not for any thing wrought in them or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing Faith it self, the act of believing, nor any other Evangelical Obedience as their Righteousness, but by imputing the Obedience and Satisfaction of Christ unto them; they receiving and resting on him, and his Righteousness by Faith: which Faith they have not of themselves, it is the Gift of God.

This agrees with that Doctrine Paul preached to the Romans and Galatians, &c. But from this Doctrine Mr. Clark (and many more) are departed; what saith the Apostle? If we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than what you have received, let him be accursed. Paul, as Mr. Perkins notes, saw the Galatians to be corrupted in the point of Justification; false Teachers being got among them, who preached Justification by Christ, and by the works of the Law: they did not exclude Christ's

Merits, but brought in the works of the Law with Christ, in Justification before God; as some now do the works of a new Law, i.e. Gospel Law: But let them tremble. Where's Paul's Doctrine? for it is palpable this new Doctrine excludes not boasting, or ground of boasting. I argue thus, viz. That Law doth not exclude boasting that commands works of Obedience, as the Condition of Acceptance and Justification: but this new Law these Men speak of, commands works of Obedience, as the Condition of our Acceptance and Justification. Ergo, *It doth not exclude boasting.* But Mr. Clark intimates,

That works of the Law, performed by our own Strength, or without special assistance only, admit of boasting.

Answ. The Papists say, that all their Works and inherent Righteousness, are performed by God's Grace or special Assistance; yet how do they boast? Let the Creature perform good Works, &c. by what Assistance he will, yet the Works are his Works; and if such by which he is justified, they admit of boasting.

Reader, The Righteousness this Man contends for, by which we are justified, is not the Righteousness of one, but the Righteousness of many, i.e. every Man's own Faith and sincere Obedience, contrary to what Paul affirms, Rom. 5.17, 18, 19.

Christ did not, saith Mr. Clark, obey the Law in Man's stead.

Answ. Then say I, he hath not fulfilled all Righteousness for us, nor answered all the demands of the Law; nor doth God's Holy Nature and Justice require a perfect Righteousness to our Justification in his sight: was not perfect Righteousness part of that Debt we owed to God? If so, who pays the Debt for us? The Penalty was but one part of our Debt. Then also it seems, the Law of perfect Righteousness doth not result from the Purity and Holiness of God, but only from the Sovereignty of his Will, not

from the rectitude of his Nature. Moreover, why then did not God give this mild Law of Faith and sincere Obedience at first, and so have saved himself of buying it so dear, i.e. with the Price of the Blood of his own Son?

Christ's active Obedience, he affirms, is not imputed to us; nay he says, that imputing Christ's Righteousness to us, is not a Scripture Expression, 'tis not found in any place of Scripture; though he says he denies not the thing.

Ans. Righteousness was imputed to Abraham, and he was the Father of all Elect Gentiles, that Righteousness might be imputed to them also. Now it must be Abraham's own Righteousness, and so our own Righteousness, that is imputed, or else the Righteousness of Christ.

Again, he may as well say Adam's active Disobedience was not imputed to us; for as by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners, so by the Obedience of one shall many be made righteous. As Adam's Disobedience in his first Sin was imputed to all his Seed, so is the Obedience of Christ imputed to all his, or to all in him. This text I find he knows not how to answer, see pag. 97, 98. but boggles with it.

Obj. They object, if the Righteousness of Christ be made ours, we may be said to be the Saviours of the World as he was, or to save others as he did, &c.

Ans. Take Dr. Owen's as to this, viz.

The Apostle declares, that as Adam's actual Sin is imputed unto us to Condemnation, so is the Obedience of Christ imputed unto us to the Justification of Life; but Adam's Sin is not so imputed unto any Person, as that he should then and thereby be the cause of Sin and Condemnation unto all other Persons in the World, but only that he himself should become guilty before God thereon. And so is it on the other side: and as we are

made guilty of Adam's actual Sin, which is not inherent in us, but only imputed unto us; so are we made righteous by the Righteousness of Christ, which is not inherent in us, but only imputed unto us; and with it, not for himself but for us.

Object. The Effects of Christ's Righteousness, &c. are imputed to us.

Answ. Saith the Doctor,

In this Imputation the thing is first imputed unto us, and not any of the Effects of it; but they are ours by virtue of that Imputation. To say that the Righteousness of Christ, that is his Obedience and Sufferings, are imputed to us only in their Effects, is to say that we have the benefit of them and no more, but Imputation it self is denied; so say (saith he) the Socinians.

Again he saith,

The Righteousness of Christ is imputed unto us, as unto its Effects, hath this sound Sense in it, viz. that the Effects of it are made ours, by reason of that Imputation; it is so imputed, so reckoned unto us of God, as that he readily communicates all the Effects of it unto us; but to say the Righteousness of Christ is not imputed unto us, but the Effects only, is really to overthrow all Imputation.

But Mr. Clark says, *'Tis the Righteousness of God by which we are justified, not the Righteousness of Christ.*

He will not have it be the Righteousness of him that was God, or take it in that Sense; but that Righteousness that God hath ordained and instituted for our Justification, viz. our Faith and sincere Obedience.

Answ. We do not only say it was the Righteousness of him that was God as well as Man, but also that Righteousness which God hath found out, and approves of, as agreeing with his Holy Nature and infinite Justice, and Purity of his Law, That he might be just: not the essential Righteousness of God, but the Righteousness of Christ as Mediator, Who of God is made to us Wisdom and Righteousness, &c. Where pray hath God made our imperfect Righteousness a Righteousness to justify us at his Bar? I am persuaded this Man would not willingly be found in his own Righteousness at Death, let it be never so sincere. Ay, but we must take the Scripture in the plain literal Sense about Justification; this he much harps at, though his Notion by thus doing brings in Justification by Works, which the Apostle shews is inconsistent, and directly contrary to Grace, Rom. 11.6. Works are Works, whether Law-Works, or Gospel-Works. He argues much as the Papists in another case, and upon as grand a Point; Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church: I will appeal to all, whether the Words in the Letter do not seem to run smoother for the Papists, i.e. for the Church to be built upon Peter, than upon Christ that Peter confessed? And so this is my Body, &c. Mr. Clark cries out against puzzling, perplexing Distinctions, and taking Faith Metonymically, i.e. for the Object of Faith, though it is clearly imply'd, and that way only it beareth a true Analogy of Faith.

I infer (saith he) that we are not justified by the active Righteousness of Christ, or his Obedience to the Law of Works imputed to us; for then a Man would be justified by the Law, and by the Deeds and Works thereof, as much to be reckoned his own, as if they were done personally by himself, (for that is their Sense of Justification) then we are justified by the Law or Covenant of Works, in a Legal and in an Evangelical way; for then the Law is fully satisfied by Christ our Surety, and we stand *recti curiâ*, and the Law has nothing to say to us, or charge us withal; as if a Surety

in Bond pay the full Debt, the Creditor has no Action against the principal Debtor, and there's no Favor at all showed him in his Discharge.

Answ. In all Places where in the New Testament it is said, a Man is not, cannot be justified by the Works of the Law, or by the Deeds of the Law, 'tis evident that the Apostle speaks of that Obedience to the Law, that frail, depraved and impotent Man is able to yield thereunto; and the Reason why no Man can be justified hereby, is,

1. Because he hath both originally, and actually broken it; and as it admits of no pardon for what is past, so also it affords no strength to keep it for time to come: hence, what the Law could not do, God sent his own Son. What for? Was it only to make God amends for our Breach of it, and so to purchase a new, a milder and better Law of Works, &c? No sure: Where is there the least shadow of proof for this? See what this Gentleman's Reverend Father saith, speaking of Christ's fulfilling the Law for us; he saith, that it was not merely Obedience, but a meriting Obedience; there was an intrinsic Worth and Excellency in Christ's Obedience, answering to our Salvation: hence, though we have Justification of meer Grace, yet in respect of Christ, it was Justice and Debt; so that in Christ the Covenant of Works was fulfilled, though in us the Covenant of Grace: this Work Christ finished and completed;

First, In that he did it wholly and universally; there was not one Tittle of the Law which he did not fulfill.

Secondly, He finished it universally for Parts, and not only so, but fully for Degrees: He did not only love God, but loved him as much as the Law requires; all that he did, was so fully done, that there wanted not the least Degree of Grace in any Duty.

Thirdly, Because he had not only an Objective Perfection in Parts and Degrees, but also a Subjective; all within was thoroughly

and perfectly holy: So that as we are originally and actually polluted, he was originally and actually holy; so that the Law had no fault to find with him.

Fourthly, He finished it in respect of Duration, the Law requiring continuance, though there were Perfection of Parts and Degrees, and subjective Perfection also: Yet cursed is he that continueth not therein. Again he saith, For to obey the Law of God, and to suffer all the Wrath that was due to our Sins, was a bitter Cup to drink.

Thus Christ fulfilled the Law for us as our Surety, and in him it was fulfilled in us, there being a Legal or Law-Union between him and us.

Now since this perfect, this compleat and constant Obedience to the Law, was our Duty, and that Debt we owed to God, Dare you deny Christ as our Surety, paid it? Certainly had he not fulfilled the Preceptory part of the Law (as well as born the Penal part) for us, we could not be justified from the Charge and Curse thereof: But why must we (because we say Surety hath done this) be justified by the Law or Covenant of Works? Are we Saviors or Mediators, because we have his Righteousness imputed to us of meer Grace? Is the Debtor the Surety, because the Surety's Payment is accepted for him? The old Covenant-Righteousness was an inherent Righteousness, a Righteousness in a Man's self, i.e. Adam's own Righteousness, not a Righteousness imputed, but inherent: the Righteousness of your new Law, is a Legal or Law-Righteousness, and looks more like an old Covenant-Righteousness, because 'tis inherent, or infused into you, not put upon you, or imputed to you, as being wrought out for you without you. And, Sir, is there no favor shewed to us, because our Surety has paid this Debt? Was it not great Love, great Grace and Favor for God to accept of a Surety? nay, to substitute his own Son in our stead to satisfy all the Demands of the Law and Justice? True, we

are not simply dealt with in a way of Mercy, (I mean pardoned only) but in a way of Justice and Righteousness also: Justification has more than Pardon in it (as your Notion allows;) we found not the Surety, but God found him; therefore all is of God's free Grace, though also all is by the Obedience of Christ, i.e. by his keeping Law for us, and dying in our stead. To plead for a Righteousness by Obedience to any mild Law, is no other than to plead for a Legal Righteousness in our selves to justify us; and that is as opposite to the Righteousness of God, as the trusting in the Moral and Ceremonial Law, it being opposite to Grace: the Righteousness therefore of the Law, by which no Flesh can be justified, is a Righteousness rested in, or trusted to, that is inherent in us, whatsoever though ts a Person may have of it, i.e. as perfectly, or only sincerely kept.

But to proceed: did not God send his Son, that the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, &c? that is, in our Nature, in our Head. Christ and Believers (as I said before) are one in a Law-sense; and evident it is, that the Righteousness of the Law is not fulfilled in us in Sanctification, because that is imperfect, that is far from fulfilling it; and there is no other way it can be said to be fulfilled in us, but by imputation.

Moreover, by Christ's coming to keep the Law in our Nature, God hath magnified the Law, and made it honourable; and hereby we do not make void the Law through Faith, but establish the Law, in that the Son of God, in Man's Nature, yielded perfect Obedience thereto, and died for our breach of it, whose Obedience is ours by imputation to our Justification at his Bar.

Pray observe that through Faith we attain a perfect Righteousness, i.e. are interested in the most compleat Obedience of Christ to the Moral Law; but now if Christ only satisfied for our breach of the Law by his Death, and his perfect active Obedience

has no hand in, or is not the material Cause of our Justification before God, how do we by believing in him establish the Law?

I say the Righteousness of the Law (which is so called) which the Apostle decries as unable to justify us, is a resting in or trusting to our imperfect Conformity to it, or to any other Law though never so sincerely performed; for this sort of Righteousness is always opposed to the Righteousness of Faith or of Grace, If it be of Works (of any Works whatsoever) it is not of Grace: all works of sincere Obedience to any Law of God, are alike materially good. But God has not ordained any Law of sincere Obedience to justify us, because Grace excludeth all Works done by us in point of Justification in God's Sight. We can no more be justified by the Law of the Gospel, i.e. the New Law, than by the Old.

Mr. Clark says,

The Justification Paul speaks of in the Romans, and that which James speaks of is the same. And further he says, to be justified by Faith according to Paul, and by Works according to James, is all one; Justification by Works springing from Faith, is Justification by Faith in this Sense.

Answ. Now we and the Orthodox say, that Paul speaks of our Justification before God, or of the Person; James of the Justification of our Faith, good Works demonstrating our Faith to be of the right kind, or do declare to Men, and to our own Consciences, that we are justified Persons. Paul speaks of the Justification of a Sinner, James of the Justification of a Believer (as it is said, the People justified God, that is, declared he was just); so our Gospel-Works springing from Faith, declare that our Faith is true, and we sincere Believers.

Yet he would have his Reader believe he is no Heterodox Person in this Point.

Paul speaks of Justification and Absolution of a Sinner at God's Bar, through the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness.

James speaks of the Manifestation or Declaration of that Justification to the Conscience.

Paul speaks of the cause of our Justification before God.

James of the signs of it before Men.

Paul speaks of the Imputation of Righteousness.

James of the Declaration of Righteousness.

Paul speaks of the Office of Faith by God's Ordination, as it apprehends Christ, &c.

James of the quality of Faith, or of its own excellent Virtue.

Paul speaks of the Justification of a Person.

James of the Justification of the Faith of that Person.

Paul speaks of Abraham how justified.

James of Abraham's good Works, as already justified, and as declaring him so to be.

Paul speaks of Justification in a proper Sense, as God's gracious act, through Christ's Righteousness, whereby a Man is imputed or counted Just and Righteous in God's Sight.

James speaks of Justification whereby we are not made Just before God, but declared to be justified, being sincere Believers, and free from Hypocrisy.

Paul had to do with Legal and Judaizing Christians, such who either brought in a Law, or a self-Righteousness, instead of God's Grace in imputing Christ's Righteousness, or else setting up an inherent Righteousness with it (as these Men do now.)

And James had to do with such, who might be justly called Antinomians, i.e. such that abused the Grace of God, or Doctrine of free Grace, to encourage themselves in Sin, boasting of a false and presumptuous Faith, a dead Faith. Now James's work is to shew the effects and nature of true Faith; therefore he speaks not of Justification in a proper Sense, when he says Abraham was justified by Works, but declaratively only. Faith wrought not with Abraham's Works, in the Justification of his Person at God's Bar, but in declaring and evincing that his Faith was true and saving, not a dead Faith; good Works being the Fruits of saving Faith. If this was not so, how could he say, in vers. 23. that The Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for Righteousness? (not his Act of Faith, but the Object his Faith believed in, or took hold of.) The Justification of a Sinner in a proper Sense is one thing, and the Justification of a Believer, as such a one, is another thing. How then can Mr. Clark say, the Justification Paul speaks of, and that which James speaks of, is all one and the same thing?

This Man contends for a mild Law; certainly the Moral Law remains a perpetual Rule of perfect Obedience: let this Man shew us where and how he can prove that God in the Gospel only commands sincere imperfect Obedience to the Moral Law: the Law surely loses no part of its sanction by the Gospel; that is as holy, just and good as ever: Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect. We are still to love the Lord our God with all our Hearts, with all our Souls, and with all our Strength. Our Faith, Love, Patience, &c. ought to be perfect; the Law or Commands of the Gospel know no bounds or limits: though the Law is abrogated as a Covenant of Works, yet not as a rule of perfect Obedience. See what Reverend Mr. Cross says, i.e.

Either the Gospel Law, or Law of Faith must require perfection in those Duties, or some other Divine Law, or else God would become an indulger of Sin by Law;

if it be by another Law, viz. the Moral, that requires perfect Obedience, and this sincere only: then these Laws differ but in degree, not in Specie or Kind; because both require the same Duties or Works: and so this Gospel Law would be no distinct Law, but only the measure of sincere Obedience, would receive a new Use of its giving right, &c. which we own it has, to wit, to be an index or mark of our Justification, though we can't own that use of giving right, &c.—a distinct Law they must hold, or quit their Cause, or this Foundation of it; for the Text sets the Law of Faith down as an opposite Law to that of Works, and that they hold: then if it be a perfect Law requiring perfect Obedience, there is no possibility of Justification in this Life — but this is not all the difficulty, for it's the adding a load to a burden: Is this Gospel to a Man that is not able to perform the least part of the Moral Law, to tell him that God or the Mediator requires perfect Obedience to it for the future, and another too? Or is this Gospel, to say you shall perish eternally, and have the Fire of Hell seven times heated, if you obey not the Gospel! it's indeed a conditional Hell, but it is more dreadful than the Fire of Hell; and the condition is more impossible, because we have less Power to shun this difficulty of two perfect Laws: Mr. Bull owns no other perfect Law but the Gospel, since Man fell; but by shunning one difficulty he falls into as great. (1) Then the Moral Law is abrogated, besides the falseness of the Doctrine it self; for it is impossible that should cease to be our duty to love God with all our Hearts and Souls. What advantage brings in Christ's Death, to abrogate one perfecting Law, and establish another? here is little Gospel. A second difficulty, i.e. we must either say Christ has purchased to us pardon for Sins against the Gospel Law, or none at all but that one Sin of Adam's, if the Moral Law be abrogated; after the fall we never sinned against any Law but the Gospel, for we were under no other Law according to him, &c.

Thus Mr. Cross. Is not much of our Obedience under the Gospel, Obedience to the Moral Law? Nay, is not the Moral Law the Rule of all our Obedience to God in all positive Gospel-precepts?

Reader, This mild Law of theirs they say requires sincere Obedience as the condition of Justification; now there is no sincere Obedience without it be universal, &c. how then may this fill a poor Christian with terror, and slavish Fear? I do all I hope sincerely, but I may not obey universally, some Precept through ignorance I may lie short of; I can't tell when my Obedience is full: Also according to them I can be but partially justified in this Life, and therefore I am partially condemned: and thus the Creature hangs till Death, between Heaven and Hell.

Ah, poor England, poor Church of God, where are thy brave old Heroes, that stood up to maintain the Truths of Christ? What Apostacy is here from the Orthodox Faith? What decay of doctrinal and practical Christianity? What dark Clouds spread over our Heavens? How are many fallen from the Faith? But I must leave Mr. Clark to an abler Pen, I designed no more than to make a few Remarks to provoke some others to reply to the Argumentative part of his Book, which I see no great difficulty to answer. Now that the Lord would scatter this Cloud, and all other dangerous Errors, let it be all our Prayers both Day and Night. Yet I doubt not but the present opposition against this Fundamental Point of Faith will cause the Truth in the end to shine more clear and bright, which the Lord grant in his Infinite Mercy, to the praise of his own Glory. Amen.

FINIS.